

# Poland's Place in the Sun

By AARON HARDY ULM



PRINCE CASIMIR LUBOMIRSKI

Minister of Poland in the United States.

**R**ANKING high among the business-like diplomatic establishments in Washington is the legation of the newly reconstituted country of Poland. Though it is directed by men with long names and high-sounding titles, its work is carried on with truly American pep. Even the minister's private secretary is an American, a capable ex-newspaperman. And, like most of the new legations, there is a press bureau which is conducted by Americans.

The Polish legation is not externally unimposing. It is on Sixteenth street, in that section of Washington where embassies and legations range in rows. It is situated in a handsome residence structure that was once the Russian embassy.

It seems strange that only during the past year has there been a Polish diplomatic establishment in this country. As any school child knows, Poland is one of the oldest of European nations. But for a hundred and fifty years, a period almost paralleling that covering the life of our own government, Poland was not a country. It was only a group of provinces ruled by Austria, Germany and Russia. That state of affairs was brought to an end by the Great War, following which the first Polish Minister to America was welcomed in Washington.

It is fitting that he should be a prince, for, though the new Poland is democratic, that land has held firmly to those aristocratic traditions of the past that it considered good.

Prince Casimir Lubomirski who, as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, represents the new Poland in Washington is a very democratic individual and wears no sword. One of the first things he and Princess Lubomirska—note the difference in spelling; it's a Polish custom—did was to enter their children in the public schools of Washington. All the family speak excellent English.

The Prince, as do most of the embassy staff, comes from Galicia, that part of Poland that was ruled by Austria, which for some reason was less harsh in its dealings with its Polish subjects than was either Germany or Russia. Many members of his family, however, suffered from the many and long oppressions that were imposed on the Polish people. He is a business man as well as an experienced statesman. He is an expert on forestry. He served in the Galician Diet, under Austrian rule, for many years, and promoted many reforms therein.

One member of the Polish legation staff, who is especially interesting to Americans, passes daily by a monument erected at the national capital in honor of one of his ancestors. He is Mr. Francis Pulaski, second in rank to the minister. He is a direct descendant of General Casimir Pulaski who helped us win our freedom from Great Britain, even to the extent of giving his life. He was killed at Savannah. Excepting LaFayette, no foreign lovers of freedom who offered their swords to Washington won greater renown in the American Revolution than did Pulaski and Kosciuszko, the famous Poles.

And right here it may be opportune to call attention to what I am told are facts; namely, that of the first 200,000 Americans to volunteer to fight for the United

States in the recent war one-half were of Polish origin. Also, I am told, nearly as large proportion of our killed and seriously injured in the recent war bore Polish names. That, presumably, followed because the volunteers were assigned to regular divisions that were in the hardest fighting.

So Americans have many reasons for appreciating that patriotism and love of freedom which have ever been characteristic of the race that produced John Sobieski, who kept the Turks from overcoming Europe.

Hence the Polish legation in Washington is very popular.

"Poland is floating at this time a fifty million dollar loan in America," said Prince Lubomirski, as this article was being prepared. "We are selling twenty-year six per cent bonds in denominations of \$50 to \$500, largely to Americans of Polish origin. I say we are selling not merely expected to sell, because the money is actually pouring in.

"This money is literally a testimonial to the sort of immigration Poland has sent to this country, the men who work in your mines, mills and factories, for it is mostly from them—their savings. One laborer in Poughkeepsie, New York, for instance, sent a check for \$5,000. That is the kind of material we have furnished America. We have a great reservoir of such men in Poland. They are our main capital, despite our rich mines, fields and forests. It is such men who will build our future."

When you talk to Poles about Poland you hear of more than Poland's ancient wrongs and Poland's long line of famous heroes and men of genius. Now that their country has been reconstituted they like to tell you of its resources. It is potentially one of the richest of agricultural lands, with an abundance of timber and coal and other minerals. Prior to the war it possessed great manufacturing resources, and was fairly well supplied with railroads. Its navigable waterways total more than 8,000 miles. The total population is about 35,000,000 and the area, still not definitely defined, is greater than that of Italy.

But the war demoralized the economic life of most of Poland as it did that of no other land, not even excepting Belgium. With three governmental systems, with armies surging back and forth over much of the country, leaving nothing but devastation, the machinery of normal life was in a state of collapse when the war came to a close.

Because of the long period of divided rule, which had tended to develop different customs, laws and economic systems in the three subjected divisions of the nation, the Poles in establishing a new government had more difficult problems to solve than faced other newly autonomous peoples.

Poland's representatives in this country say their country is overcoming its difficulties, even the hugest, which is a war along a 700-mile front with the Bolsheviks of Russia.

Prince Lubomirski denies that that war is the result of imperialistic or militaristic impulses.

"The government of Poland is a republican government," says the Prince. "The Polish Diet, that maintains the armies at the front and is engaged in the rehabilitation of the nation's interior, was

elected by universal suffrage under franchise regulations as broad as any in democratic nations the world over. Seventy per cent of the Polish Diet consists of peasants, small landowners whose holdings average between five and fifteen acres. In the language of politicians, the Polish Diet is controlled by the common people, not by the aristocracy or professional politicians. Therefore when the Polish Diet announces to the world by resolution, and the Chief of State, General Pilsudski, announces to the world by proclamation, that the Polish armies have advanced to restore law and order and the rights of property, of peasant as well as large landowner, and that the Polish Government will not incorporate into Poland any territory that does not ask for such incorporation, you find there the voice of democracy expressing the ideals of self-determination of small nations as were expressed by the President of the United States. You will find there the promise and the will to carry out engagements such as Poland can point to in the case of Latvia, whose territories were freed of the Bolshevik armies by aid of Polish troops, and whose territories were then immediately evacuated by the Polish armies and turned over to the administration

of the Latvian authorities. Similar promises have been made to the people of Ukraina, and those promises will be carried out with the same sincere consideration and with the same feeling of the profound obligation of national honor that marked Poland's policy in Latvia.

"It is incessantly charged that Poland is taking a part of Russia. It is forgotten that until 1792 the territories now being freed by the Polish armies were parts of Poland. It is forgotten that the Ukrainian peasant is not a Russian peasant, that he has no sympathy with Russian rule, past or present, that he was oppressed and degraded by imperialistic Russia and has been terrorized and his properties confiscated by Red Russia. For centuries his language has been proscribed, his literature banned, his aspirations thwarted, and his numerous attempts to free himself defeated by bloody suppression. Unlike the great mass of Russian peasants, he has been a landowner by title, thrifty and largely self-sufficient. It is for those reasons that he is jealous of his territory and welcomes with eagerness the advent of the Polish armies that had been promised to assist him in freeing his land and then restoring it to his rule. In return, such a policy for the benefit of the Ukrainian peasant is a benefit to Poland and the world at large. It means protection for the southern frontier of Poland by the substitution of a friendly state for the Bolshevik armies. It means the assistance of Poland will be able to market his products, Poland be relieved of her food shortage and have a market for her manufactures, and the greatest granary in Europe opened up to the world.

"America and the world should remember," Prince Lubomirski continued, "that the complete regeneration of and reconstitution of a country like Poland, after years of oppression and war devastation frightful in its dimensions, cannot take place in a day."

Poland expects to do much business with America. Already an order has been placed in this country for \$7,000,000 worth of locomotives. They expect to purchase \$100,000,000 worth of raw cotton from us this year, for they have cotton textile mills with a consuming capacity of 350,000 bales a year. They are now operating on a 24-hour day basis. More than 150,000 persons are employed in the mills of Lodz and Warsaw.

In normal times, Poland produces much sugar, having 90 factories with a producing capacity of 720,000 tons at the outbreak of the war. The sugar comes from beets grown on Polish farms. They also manufacture much in the way of starch products and spirits, leather goods, pulp, paper and chemicals.

But the country is chiefly agricultural, about 70 per cent of the population being engaged in farming. Herbert Hoover says that Poland will be able to produce more foodstuffs than it can consume. They will also export iron, coal, oil, and timber, as well as to be able to use those products in domestic manufactures.

They have much water power awaiting development. The rehabilitation of industry has been delayed by the lack of materials and machinery.

"Our pressing needs are for cotton, wool, tractors, railway carriages and seeds," says the Polish Minister in Washington. "I make no mention of food, for that depends somewhat on the fortunes of war. If the Ukrainian wheat surplus is released and made available, we may have no occasion to go abroad for grain supplies."

"There are at least 8,000,000 acres of fertile ground that are not in cultivation and cannot be put under cultivation at this time. It represents territory that was devastated by advancing and retreating armies—the villages and the farm homes were burned, all agricultural implements removed and the territory laid waste. If the peasants are provided with seed and implements for working the soil they will return to their farms, even though they have no roof over their heads. We may get needed seed from Ukraina and Rumania, and, if so, we will have to look to the United States for farm tools. As soon as Poland is supplied with seed and implements, she will quickly get into position to export 800,000 tons of cereals a year."

Steps have been taken to straighten out the country's financial system and to put its currency on a sound basis, so that foreign trade may be expedited.



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THE POLISH LEGATION IN WASHINGTON